

OUTSTANDING MILITARY IN THE HISTORY OF MEXICO (1)

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Note: The translation into English is carried out through the use of software, so there may be discrepancies with the usual use of this language, we appreciate your understanding in this regard.

A postal tribute to twelve leaders who **managed**, directing and fighting together with their troops, **to add** to Mexico's consolidation as an independent and sovereign nation with social justice. "Nation builders."

In **1995**, a commemorative series of 6 stamps was issued with the theme: "Outstanding military personnel in the History of Mexico", all with a face value of N\$1.80 new pesos, printed by Romo and designed by "Cora", in horizontal format. The same theme was issued again in **1997** with 6 other stamps, all with a face value of \$2.00 pesos, printed by Romo and designed by "Barranca", in vertical format. The **12** individuals represented hold the rank of general and on the stamps they all appear with three stars, as division generals. The 1997 stamps note for each of them in their vignette the title of "Division General", but not the 1995 ones. The military feats of each of the generals occurred in different periods, ranging from the War of Independence (1810-1821), the North American Invasion (1846-1848), the Reform War (1859-1861), passing through the French Intervention (1862-1867) until the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920).

1995

SC# 1937 Ignacio Zaragoza
SC# 1938 Sóstenes Rocha
SC# 1939 Felipe B. Berriozábal
SC# 1940 Pedro María Anaya
SC# 1941 Leandro Valle
SC# 1942 Santos Degollado

1997

SC# 2023 Francisco L. Urquiza
SC# 2024 Mariano Escobedo
SC# 2025 Jacinto B. Treviño González
SC# 2026 Felipe Ángeles Ramírez
SC# 2027 Cándido Aguilar Vargas
SC# 2028 Joaquín Amaro Domínguez

In the **1995** issue, the 6 generals that appear on each of the stamps participated in the heroic deeds of the 19th century. In the **1997** issue, also of 6 generals, **5 of them** participated militarily in the **Mexican Revolution** but **Mariano Escobedo** was not a revolutionary, he participated in the war events of the **19th century**, so I will develop this topic in two publications: the first publication includes the 7 who participated in war events of the 19th century and will be called "**Outstanding Military in the History of Mexico: 19th century**" and the **second publication** "**Outstanding Military in the History of Mexico: the revolutionaries**".

Outstanding military in the history of Mexico (1st part): 19th century.-

In chronological order of their year of birth					
SC#	Name	Fig.	Birth in	Death in	Tears Of life
1940	Pedro María Anaya	1	1794	1854	60
1942	Santos Degollado	2	1811	1861	50
2024	Mariano Escobedo	3	1826	1902	76
1937	Ignacio Zaragoza	4	1829	1862	33
1939	Felipe Berriozábal	5	1829	1900	71
1938	Sóstenes Rocha	6	1831	1897	66
1941	Leandro Valle	7	1833	1861	28

Starting in 1821, when Mexico became independent from the Spanish monarchy, the country went through, throughout the rest of the century, a series of political and war events that shaped our nation, there were many. For the development of this analysis I have selected the following 4: Independence, North American Invasion, War of the Reform and French Intervention to establish a link between these events and the Outstanding Military.

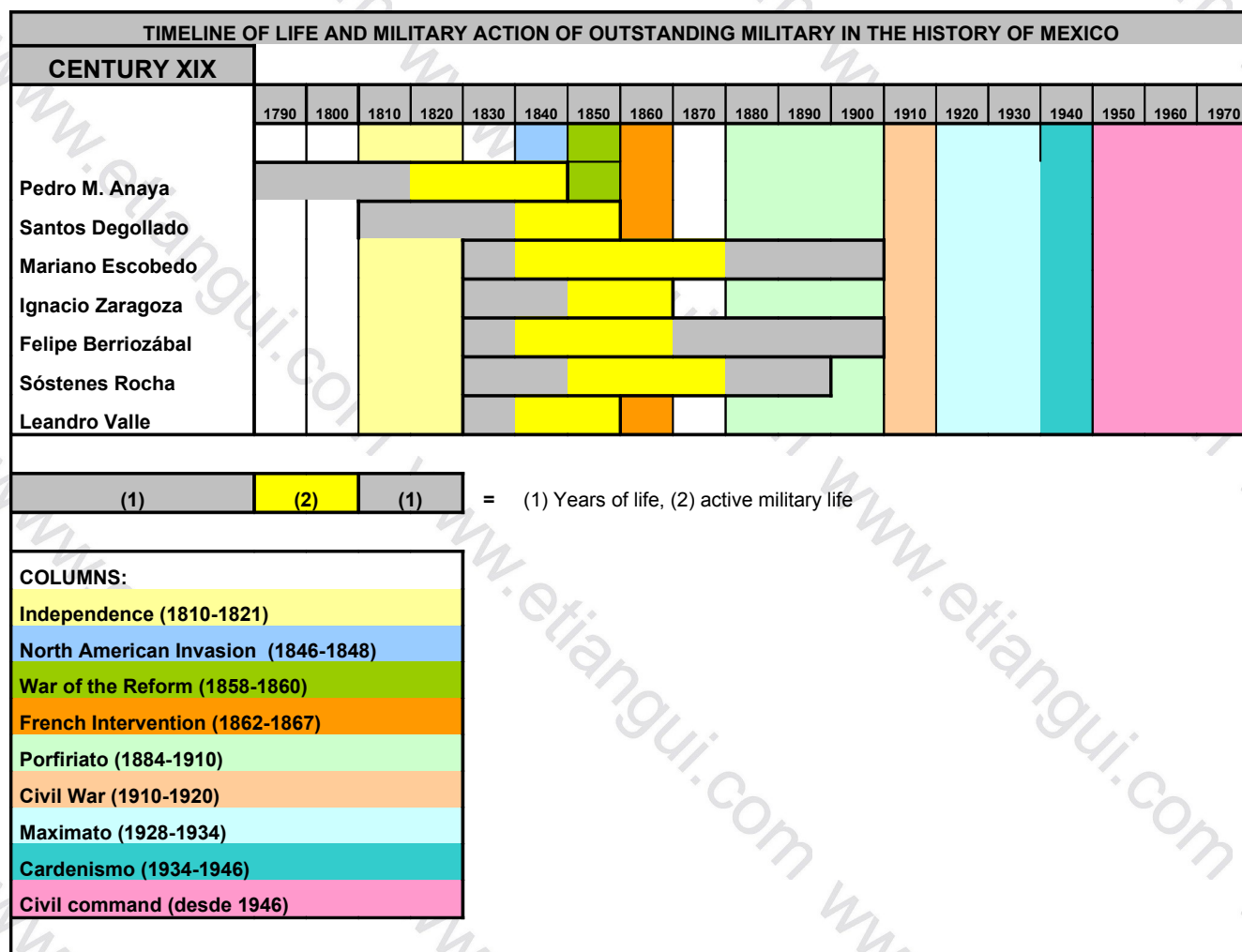




Fig. 1 Pedro M. Anaya



Fig. 2 Santos Degollado



Fig. 3 Mariano Escobedo



Fig. 4 Ignacio Zaragoza



Fig. 5 Felipe Berriozábal



Fig. 6 Sóstenes Rocha



Fig. 7 Leandro Valle

The 4 war events.-

1) The Independence (1810-1821).-

Conquered and colonized the territory by the Spanish since **1521**, it was at the beginning of the first decade of the **1800s** that movements seeking independence from the Spanish emerged, both in New Spain and in other viceroyalties in America. In Mexico, the movement that took up arms and confronted the royalist troops **began in 1810** and lasted 11 years until achieving independence in **1821**.

Pedro María Anaya is the only one of the 7 generals who participated in the War of Independence.

2) North American Invasion (1846-1848).-

Since **1823**, the Mexican territory of Texas was peacefully populated by North American migrants; in **1829** the Mexican government allows Stephen Austin to take Anglo-Saxon migrants; The United States of America (USA), represented by Joel Robert Poinsett, offer to buy Texas for 5 million pesos and Mexico refuses; with the economic and military support of the USA, a separatist movement emerged and in **March 1836** Texas declared its independence from Mexico. The Mexican government tried to recover the territory and after several confrontations during the month of April, the Mexicans were defeated; On **May 14, 1836**, General Antonio López de Santa Anna, defeated and imprisoned, signs the Treaty of Velasco where he recognizes Texan independence. In **March 1845**, the Republic of Texas is annexed to the United States and they try to buy Alta California and New Mexico from Mexico, the Mexican government refuses; with border aggressions and clashes between troops from both countries, the United States declared war on Mexico on **May 13, 1846**. On **February 2, 1848**, the Guadalupe-Hidalgo Treaty was signed, ending the North American Invasion but with the loss for Mexico of the part of its territorial extension north of the Rio Grande.

Of the 7 soldiers listed, **4 participate** in the war against the **North American invasion**: the oldest soldier (**Anaya**), and the youngest on the list (**Valle**), also the two who lived many years (**Escobedo and Berriozábal**).

3) War of Reform (1858-1860).-

Two antagonistic groups, in their vision of the country, emerged in the country: **the conservatives** who were inclined to maintain the colonial structures where the Catholic Church enjoyed political power and they preferred a monarchical form of government, among other things, and **the liberals** who wanted freedom of worship, take power away from the church and establish a federation. In 1857 Congress approved a new, liberal constitution, and in December of that year there was an attempt to repeal it by the group of conservatives. The civil war known as the Three Years' War or the War of Reform begins.

In 1858, the **6 living generals**, of the 7 on the list, participated in the **Reform War** supporting the liberals. Two of them lost their lives at the hands of the conservatives at the end of the conflict: Santos Degollado and Leandro Valle. The **4 remaining generals fight** against the **French Intervention**.

4) French Intervention (1862-1867).-

As a consequence of the Reform War, the country was devastated. The unsustainable economic crisis caused Congress to decree the **suspension of payments on all public debts** on July 17, **1861**; England, Spain and France, as affected creditors, reached an agreement among themselves and decided to occupy the military fortresses on the coasts to collect customs revenues. The Mexican government requested an extension. In December 1861, Spanish troops arrived on the coast of Veracruz and in January 1862, English and French troops arrived. On **February 19, 1862**, the Treaties of La Soledad were signed between Mexico and the three affected countries, which recognized the constitutional government of Benito Juárez and agreed to negotiate their debts; The English and Spanish troops withdrew, but the French troops did not. By **June 1863**, the French occupied the capital of the country, the Mexican government under the command of Benito Juárez became itinerant, leaving the capital of the country and initially moving to San Luis Potosí and the group of Mexican conservatives offered Maximilian of Habsburg to be emperor of Mexico, with French military backing.

Of the 7 outstanding military men of the 19th century, **Leandro Valle and Sóstenes Rocha** had formal military education at the **Military College**.

Generals **Escobedo and Berriozábal** complete an **extensive military record** that goes from the North American Invasion to the French Intervention; At the end of their lives, together with General Sóstenes Rocha, they participated with active political and/or administrative roles in the management of Porfirio Díaz.

Some highlights of the Generals.-

Pedro María Anaya.

He began his military career at the **age of 16** in the army of New Spain. In June **1821** he changed sides and joined the insurgent army that sought the country's Independence, remaining with the insurgents until the consummation of Independence; He was **52 years old** when the conflict with the Americans began; In **August 1847** he participated in the **Battle of Churubusco**, which was finally lost to North American forces. Anaya was taken prisoner and released until the signing of the armistice between Santa Anna and General Scott. It is remembered about Anaya that when he was defeated in the battle of Churubusco, the North American general demanded that he hand over the ammunition and Anaya replied: **"If there was a park, you would not be here"**. After the signing of the Treaties of Guadalupe Hidalgo, General Anaya was appointed **General Administrator of the Post Office Revenue**, until 1852 when he was appointed Minister of War; He returned to the Post Office in January 1853 until his **death** on March 21, **1854**, as a result of a fulminant pneumonia..

Santos Degollado.-

His name was José Nemesio Francisco Degollado Sánchez but he called himself "Santos", apparently because he was baptized on November 1, All Saints' Day in the Catholic faith. In his youth he settled in Morelia Michoacán and there began his friendship with Melchor Ocampo (1) and his adherence to liberal thought. Militarily, he participated in the

Ayutla revolution (2) that overthrew Santa Anna from the presidency of the Republic and gave his support to the cause of Juárez in the Reform War. In **1858** he was appointed **Minister of War and general in chief of the liberal army**. "Better organizer of armies than strategist... he is called in life 'The hero of defeats' and 'The Saint of the Reformation'" (3). In January **1860** Santos Degollado was appointed **Minister of Foreign Affairs**, a position he held for a short time and in July he continued as general in chief of the liberal army; In September of that same year he was dismissed for trying to negotiate a peace with the conservatives through England. In December of that year the liberals definitively defeated the conservatives. With the disgrace of having lost military command and awaiting trial, his great friend and companion in so many battles, Melchor Ocampo, was shot by a group of conservatives on June 3, 1861. Degollado asked Congress for permission to leave. to fight those responsible for his murder and was **killed on June 16, 1861**.

Mariano Escobedo.-

He was **21 years old** when he fought against the North American Invasion; Originally from the town of Galeana in Nuevo León, his field of military action was in the northeast of the country. He participated in the Ayutla revolution (2) and then in the Reform War with the groups that left Monterrey, he was in Guanajuato and Jalisco, he fought alongside **Degollado** in Guadalajara, in the center of the country and Mexico City. When the liberals triumph he retires to private life. **Escobedo took up arms to fight against the French Invasion**, he participated in the battles of the Cumbres de Acultzingo in April 1862 and that of May 5 in 1862. In **1866**, as **Chief of the Northern Republican Army**, he controlled the northeastern states and the French and conservatives had to withdraw; President Benito Juárez appointed him **General in Chief of the Republican Army to attack Maximiliano's forces** in Querétaro; Escobedo's troops besieged the city and managed to get them to surrender on **May 15, 1867** and then came the trial and subsequent execution of Maximiliano, and of generals Miguel Miramón (4) and Tomás Mejía on June 19 of the same year. In the 1870s he fought Porfirio Díaz in his armed uprisings against the governments of Juárez and Lerdo de Tejada; when Díaz became president, Escobedo went into self-exile in the United States of America, but Porfirio Díaz granted him amnesty so that he could return to Mexico. Due to his multiple military merits defending the country for **more than 30 years**, he granted him a lifetime license as a deputy, a position he held when he **died** in Mexico City in **1902**. The Monterrey international airport in his native Nuevo León takes his name.

Ignacio Zaragoza.-

He had a short but transcendent life, he lived 33 fruitful years, his name is among the most significant in the history of Mexico. He was born (**1829**) in Bahía de Espíritu Santo in what **was the Mexican state of Coahuila-Texas** and today is Goliad in the state of Texas, so currently the official name of the Mexican state of Coahuila is **Coahuila de Zaragoza** because at the time Zaragoza was born in his constituency. He joined the Nuevo León **National Guard** in **1846**, participated in the Ayutla revolution (2); he joins the Reform War; He participated in the memorable battle of **Calpulalpan** in December 1860 and was promoted to general. At the end of the Reform War, Ignacio Zaragoza was appointed **Minister of War and Navy** by President Juárez, a position he left to carry out the president's order to lead the **Army of the East to stop the French army's advance** towards Mexico City, in Puebla. French army was considered at that time the best in the world, was under the command of General Lorencez. On **May 5, 1862** "...the national arms have been covered in glory..." Zaragoza communicated to Juárez after the Mexican triumph. Four months after his triumph on May 5, 1862, Ignacio Zaragoza contracted typhoid fever and **died on September 8, 1862**; In **January** of that same year, **his wife**, Rafaela Padilla de la Garza, **had died** in Mexico City of pneumonia. During five years of marriage they had three children, of whom only their daughter Rafaela (1860-1927) survived.

Felipe Berriozábal.-

He was originally from Zacatecas, and in **1842** he entered the National School of Engineers in Mexico City. During the **North American invasion** he left his studies and joined the National Guard as a Lieutenant of Engineers. He was **17 years old**; at the end of the war he returned to finish his studies and graduated as an **engineer in 1849**. In **March 1858** Felipe Berriozábal placed himself under the orders of Santos **Degollado** to fight in the **Reform War**, he was **also** under the orders of **Ignacio Zaragoza**; in December 1860 he was taken prisoner along with Degollado in Toluca by Miguel Miramón (4) and they recovered his freedom after the triumph of the liberals in Calpulalpan. Being governor of the State of Mexico, he left office to rejoin as a soldier and **fight against the French Intervention**, despite his

widowhood and being in charge of his four children. After the war, He held various political and/or military positions. During the government of General **Porfirio Díaz** he was **Minister of the Interior** in **1880** and of **War and Navy** from **1896** until the day of his **death**, on January 9 (some sources say 8), **1900**.

Sóstenes Rocha.-

A general rarely mentioned in Mexican History school books and controversial, because I find sources that praise him excessively to sources that despise him. At the age of **20** he enters the **Military College**. At the beginning of the Reform War he was on the side of the conservatives along with his classmate Miguel Miramón (4) at the Military School, participating in the Battle of Guanajuato and Tacubaya; In **1860** he joined the liberal movement under the orders of General Santos **Degollado**. With the rank of colonel and under the orders of Ignacio **Zaragoza**, he participated in the **battle of May 5, 1862**. In mid-**1863** he was promoted to brigadier general and incorporated into the Northern Army under the command of **Mariano Escobedo**, remaining in the north of the country; in June **1866** they took Monterrey, the battle of Santa Gertrudis was won in the area of Camargo in Tamaulipas, Matamoros was recovered and the road was opened to go to the center of the country, from there followed the taking of Querétaro and the debacle of Maximiliano and his followers. He was sent in **1876** to specialize in **higher military studies in Europe** by the government of Lerdo de Tejada; he was **director of the Military College from 1880 to 1886** and upon finishing this position he was president of the Commission of Regulations, Statutes and Ordinances of the Mexican Army until his **death (1896)**. He wrote three books on military topics: "Studies on the Science of War", "Memory aid for the Mexican officer", "Exploration of cavalry in the field for sergeants and corporals". He was editor-in-chief of the newspaper *El Combate* and vice president of the Associated Press of Mexico.

Leandro Valle.-

He entered the **Military College at the age of 11**, he was a classmate of Miguel Miramón (4) and they began a friendship that overcame their later ideological differences. Both were part of the Boys Heroes as they were cadets at the Military College during the **North American Invasion**, **Valle had 13 years** old and Miramón 15; Valle was under the orders of Juan Álvarez (2) in defense in Mexico City. He participated in the Ayutla revolution and then in the Reform War. He participated in the decisive battle in **Calpulalpan**, next to Zaragoza on December 22, **1860** and after the defeat of the conservatives Miguel Miramón wrote to his friend Leandro: *"Dear Leandro.- It will not be difficult for Concha to need someone of influence from the triumphant party, and I prefer to address you than to anyone of her relatives, so that you can do for her in the name of our old friendship, what I would do for your family in the same case. Enjoy congratulations and send your friend.- Miguel Miramón. December 24, 1860."* Valle honored his friendship and supported Concepción Lombardo de Miramón, Miramón's wife, in allowing her and her children to leave the country (5). After the triumph of the liberals in December 1860, many conservative guerrillas remained attacking and murdering liberals; **Melchor Ocampo** was shot on June 3, 1861 by one of those groups mentioned, Santos **Degollado** went out to avenge his death and was killed, Leandro Valle went out to avenge, along with other generals, the death of Degollado, and when defeated he was shot like a traitor. **Leandro Valle had a short life but an extensive and glorious record of services to the country**. Before being shot, Leandro Valle writes a letter to his family: *"Dear father and mother, all brothers: I am going to die because this is the fate of war and it does nothing more to me than what I would have done in the same case. So, no hatred, because it is only fair revenge. I have always done my duty; Little brothers, please do your part and may our name be honored, like the one I have managed to preserve until now."* (3)

.Notas:

- (1) Melchor Ocampo, intellectual of liberal thought, participant in the drafting of the Reform Laws.
- (2) General Juan Álvarez led the Plan of Ayutla in 1854 that finally managed to remove Antonio López de Santa Anna from the position of president.
- (3) Op,cit. Carmona Dávila, Doralicia in Memoria Política de México. Biografías
- (4) Miguel Miramón general of the conservative side who was shot in 1867 along with Maximiliano de Habsburgo and Tomás Mejía.
- (5) Op. Cit: Salmerón, Luis A. in Relatos e Historias: Leandro Valle el general más joven en la Guerra de Reforma

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